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PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES OF NATIONALISM.

EDWARD HELLAM'S ADDRESS AT TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON, ON THE
NATIONALIST CLUB'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY, DEC. 31, 1889.

No fact is better established by experience or more easily demonstrable by reason than that no republic can long exist unless a substantial equality in the wealth of citizens prevails. Wealth is power in its most concentrated, most efficient and most universally applicable form. In the presence of great disparities of wealth, social equality is at an end, industrial independence is destroyed, while mere constitutional stipulations as to the equal rights of citizens, politically or before the law, become ridiculous.

One hundred years ago this Republic was founded upon a substantial equality in the condition of the people. It was not an equality established by law, but a condition resulting from a general state of poverty. For seventy years the increase in the wealth of the country was gradual, but within the last thirty years, owing to great mechanical and commercial inventions, it has multiplied by leaps and bounds, no longer growing from decade to decade by arithmetical, but by geometrical ratio. Instead of chiefly tending to enhance the general welfare of the people, this wealth has been mainly appropriated by a small class. At the present time the property of 100,000 men in the United States aggregates more than the total possessions of the rest of the people. Ten thousand people own nearly the whole of New York City with its 2,000,000 population. The entire bonded debt of the United States is held by 71,000 persons only, and over 60 per cent. of it is in the hands of 23,000 persons. A volume of similar details might be furnished, but the situation may be summed up in one of the characteristic phrases of modern business, as follows: Mainly within the last thirty years 100,000 Americans have succeeded in "freezing out" their 65,000,000 co-partners as to more than half the assets of the concern, and, at the same rate, within thirty years more will have secured the remainder.

This is the situation which has created the need for Nationalism. These are the facts which account for the rapidity of its spread among the people.

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For the sake of clearness let us distinguish the evil effects of the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, as political, social and industrial. First, as to the political effects.

The great corporations and combinations of capital dwarf our municipalities, overtop our States and are able to dictate to our National Legislature. The extent to which intimidation and bribery are employed to influence popular elections taints with the suspicion of fraud nearly all verdicts of the ballot, when the majority is not large. Even in the grand appeal to the Nation the money power, by judicious concentration of corruption funds upon close States, is able to set at naught the will of the people. The titles of the Presidents of the Republic are no longer clear. What money cannot affect at the polls, by intimidation or by bribery, it does not hesitate to attempt by the corruption of individual legislators. Our municipal Council chambers are too often mere auction rooms, where public franchises are sold to the highest bidder. The Legislatures of some of our greatest States are commonly said to be owned by particular corporations. The United States Senate is known as a "rich men's club," and in the lower House of Congress the schemes of capital have only to meet the sham opposition of the demagogue.

Socially, the vast disparities of wealth afford on every side inhuman contrasts of cruel want and inordinate luxury. The dazzling illustrations of pomp and power, which are the prizes of wealth, have lent to the pursuit of gain, at all times sufficiently keen, a feverish intensity and desperation never seen before in this or any other country. The moderate rewards of persistent industry seem contemptible in the midst of a universal speculative fever. In all directions the old ways of legitimate business and steady application are being abandoned for speculative projects, gambling operations and all manner of brigandage under forms of law. The spectacle presented in many instances of great riches, notoriously won by corrupt methods, has undermined the foundations of honesty. The epidemic of fraud and embezzlement, which to-day renders wealth so insecure, results from the general recognition that the possession of property, though it may have a legal title, is very commonly without a moral one. This is the deplorable explanation of the cynical tolerance of fraud by public opinion. Property will not, in the long run, be respected which is without some reasonable basis in industry or desert, and it is justly believed that much of the

wealth of to-day could not stand inquiry into the means of its getting. The consequences of the appropriation of the Nation's wealth by a few, and its further concentration by means of corporations and syndicates, have made possible a policy of monopolizing the control and profits of the industries of the country never before even imagined as among the possible perils of society. Hitherto, when oligarchies have usurped the political control of nations, they have left the conduct of business to the vulgar, but our would-be "nobility" is laying its foundation deeper by obtaining absolute mastery of the means of support of the people.

The effect of the concentration and combination of capital in the conduct of business has been directly to bring the wage earner more completely than ever under the thumb of the employer. A chief object of combination is to control prices by restricting production—that is to say, employment. While the competition among wage earners for work is thus made more desperate, they are placed at the mercy of employers by the fact that in so far as employers are consolidated they no longer compete with one another. But there could be no greater mistake than to fancy that the manual worker is peculiarly a victim of the present situation. The business men, the small tradesmen and manufacturers, and the professional classes are suffering quite as much and have quite as much to dread from monopoly as has the poorest class of laborers. As one after another the different departments of business, productive and distributive, pass under the single or syndicate control of the great capitalists, the so-called middle-class, the business men with moderate capital and plenty of wit, who used to conduct the business of the country, are crowded out of their occupation and rendered superfluous. No doubt the substitution of single for multiple control and the suppression of middlemen represents an economy. But the economy does not benefit the consumer, but goes to swell the profits of the capitalists. Meanwhile, fathers who were set up by their fathers in business find it impossible to do the like for their sons. There is now almost no opportunity left for starting in business in a moderate way; none, indeed, unless backed by large capital. What this means is that we are rapidly approaching a time when there will be no class between the very rich, living on their capital, and a vast mass of wage and salary receivers absolutely dependent upon the former class for their livelihood. As an immediate

effect of the closing up of business careers to young men, the professions are being overcrowded to the starvation point. The problem before young men coming out of school or college, where to find a place in the world, was never so hard as now. Plutocracy is indeed fast leaving no place for a young man of independent and patriotic spirit, save in the party of Radical Social Reform. The agricultural interests of the country are passing under the yoke of the money power quite as rapidly as the other forms of industry. The farmers are becoming expropriated by the operation of something like a universal mortgage system, and unless this tendency shall be checked the next generation of farmers will be a generation of tenants-at-will. The agrarian conditions of Ireland bid fair in no long time to be reproduced in portions of the West.

Such, fellow-countrymen, is the condition of political corruption, of social rottenness, of moral degeneracy, of industrial oppression, confusion and impending ruin which has resulted from the overthrow of our republican equality by the money power. If you would learn how republics perish, shut up your musty histories of Greece and Rome and look about you.

In time the money power is bound to seek protection from the rising discontent of the masses in a stronger form of government, and then the republic, long before dead, will be put out of sight. Then it will be too late to resist. Now it is not too late. The republic is being taken from us, but it is still possible to bring it back. Soon it will be too late to do so, but to-day there is yet time, though there is none to waste. The Nationalists of the United States ask the co-operation of their fellow-countrymen to bring back the republic. To that end they propose a reorganization of the industrial system which shall restore the equality of the people and secure it by a perpetual guarantee.

In advocating a plan to secure equality we propose to graft no new or strange principle upon the republican idea, but the exercise of a power implied in the very idea of republicanism as ultimately necessary to its preservation. A republic is a form of government based upon and guaranteeing to all citizens a common interest in the national concern. That interest can be common only in proportion as it is substantially an equality of interest. The time has now come in America, as it has come sooner or later in the history of all republics, when by the increase of wealth, and by gross disparity in its distribution, this equality in its three aspects,—political, social, industrial,—is

threatened with complete subversion. In order, under the changed conditions, to make good the original pledge of the republic to its citizens it has become necessary to re-establish and maintain by some deliberate plan that economic equality, the basis of all other sorts of equality which, when the republic was established, existed in a substantial degree by nature. The question is not of assuming a new obligation, but whether the original ends and purposes of the republican compact shall be repudiated. We demand that the republic keep faith with the people, and propose a plan of industrial reorganization which seems to us the only possible means by which that faith can be kept. We are the true conservative party, because we are devoted to the maintenance of republican institutions against the revolution now being effected by the money power. We propose no revolution, but that the people shall resist a revolution. We oppose those who are overthrowing the republic. Let no mistake be made here. We are not revolutionists, but counter-revolutionists.

But while the guarantee of the equality of citizens is thus a measure amply justified and necessitated by merely patriotic and national considerations, without looking further for arguments, we do, in proposing this action, look both further and higher, to the ends of the earth, indeed, and the ultimate destiny of the race. While historic, political and economic conditions require that this movement should be conducted on national lines by each people for itself, we hold the economic equality of all men a principle of universal application, having for its goal the eventual establishment of a brotherhood of humanity as wide as the world and as numerous as mankind. Those who believe that all men are brothers, and should so regard one another, must believe in the equality of men, for equals only can be brothers. Even brothers by blood do but hate each other the more bitterly for the tie when the inheritance is unequally parted between them, while strangers are presently made to feel like brothers by equality of interest or community of loss and gain. Therefore we look to the establishment of equality among men as the physical basis necessary to realize that brotherhood of humanity regarded by the good and wise of all ages as the ideal state of society. We believe that a wonderful confluence, at the present epoch, of material and moral tendencies throughout the world, has made a great step in the evolution of humanity not only possible, but necessary for the salvation of the race. We are surrounded by perils from which the only way of escape is the way upward.

The plan of industrial reorganization which Nationalism proposes is the very simple and obvious one of placing the industrial duty of citizens on the ground on which their military duty already rests. All able-bodied citizens are held bound to fight for the nation, and, on the other hand, the nation is bound to protect all citizens, whether they are able to fight or not. Let us extend this accepted principle to industry, and hold every able-bodied citizen bound to work for the nation, whether with mind or muscle, and, on the other hand, hold the nation bound to guarantee the livelihood of every citizen, whether able to work or not. As in military matters the duty to fight is conditioned upon physical ability, while the right of protection is conditioned only upon citizenship, so would we condition the obligation to work upon the strength to work, but the right to support upon citizenship only.

The result would be to substitute for the present ceaseless industrial civil war, of which it would be hard to say whether it is more brutal or more wasteful, a partnership of all the people, a great joint stock company to carry on the business of the country for the benefit of all equally, women with men, sick with well, strong with weak. This plan of a national business partnership of equals we hold not only to be demonstrably practicable, but to constitute as truly the only scientific plan for utilizing the energy of the people in wealth production, as it is the only basis for society consistent with justice, with the sentiment of brotherhood, with the teachings of the founder of Christianity, and, indeed, of the founders of all the great religions.

The realization of the proposed plan of industry requires as the preliminary step the acquisition by the nation through its government, National and Municipal, of the present industrial machinery of the country. It follows therefore that the Nationalists' programme must begin with the progressive nationalization of the industries of the United States. In proposing this course we are animated by no sentiment of bitterness toward individuals or classes. In antagonizing the money power we antagonize not men but a system. We advocate no rash or violent measures, or such as will produce derangement of business or undue hardship to individuals. We aim to change the law by the law, and the Constitution, if necessary, by constitutional methods. As to the order in which industries should be nationalized, priority should naturally be given to those the great wealth of which renders them perilous to legislative independence, to those which deal extortionately with the public

or oppressively with employees, to those which are highly systematized and centralized, and to those which can be readily assimilated by existing departments of government.

The following are some of the measures in the line of this policy for which the country appears to be quite ready:

First—The nationalization of the railroads whether by constituting the United States perpetual receiver of all lines, to manage the same in the public interest, paying over to the present security holders, pending the complete establishment of Nationalism, such reasonable dividends on a just valuation of the property as may be earned, or by some other practicable method not involving hardship to individuals. The nationalization of the railroads is advisable for reasons apart from the Nationalist programme proper. Firstly, the railroad corporations, by the corrupt use of their vast wealth to procure and prevent legislation, are among the most formidable of the influences which are debauching our government. Secondly, the power they wield irresponsibly over the prosperity of cities, states and entire sections of the country, ought to be in the hands only of the general Government. Thirdly, the desperate rivalry of the railroads, with its incidents of reckless extension, duplication and rate wars, has long been a chief waste of the National resources, and a cause of periodical business crises. Fourthly, the financial management of a large portion of the railroad system, together with its use for speculative purposes, has rendered railroad financing the most gigantic gambling and general swindling business ever carried on in any country. Fifthly, the convenience and safety of the travelling public demand a uniform and harmonious railroad system throughout the country, nor is it likely that anything less will bring to an end the cruel slaughter of railroad employees now carried on by the corporations.

A second measure for which the people are certainly quite ready is the nationalization of the telegraphic and telephone services, and their addition to the Post-Office, with which, as departments of transmission of intelligence, they should properly always have been connected.

Third—We propose that the express business of the country be assumed by the post-offices, according to the successful practice of other countries.

Fourth—We propose that the coal-mining business, which at present is most rapaciously conducted as respects the public, and

most oppressively as regards a great body of laborers, be nationalized; to the end that the mines may be continuously worked to their full capacity, coal furnished consumers at cost and the miners humanely dealt with. It is suggested that all mines hereafter discovered or opened shall be regarded as public property, subject to just compensation for land.

Fifth—We propose that municipalities generally shall undertake lighting, heating, running of street cars and such other municipal services as are now discharged by corporations, to the end that such services may be more cheaply and effectually rendered; that a frequent source of political corruption be cut off and a large body of laborers be brought under humaner conditions of toil.

Pending the municipalization of all such services as have been referred to, Nationalists enter a general protest against the grant to corporations of any further franchises whether relating to transit, light, heat, water or other public services.

It is to be understood that all nationalized and municipalized businesses should be conducted at cost for use and not for profit, the amount at present paid for taxes by such businesses, being for the present, charged upon them.

It is an essential feature of the method of Nationalism that as fast as industries are nationalized or municipalized, the conditions of the workers in them shall be placed upon a wholly humane basis. The hours of labor should be made reasonable, the compensation adequate, the conditions safe and healthful. Support in sickness, with pensions for disabled and superannuated workers, should be guaranteed.

The question will be asked, "How is this great force of public employees to be placed beyond the power of politicians and administrations to use for partisan purposes?" Nationalists respond by proposing a plan for organizing and maintaining all businesses made public that shall absolutely deprive parties or politicians of any direct or arbitrary power over their membership, either as to appointment, promotion or removal.

In the first place, it is understood that upon the nationalization or municipalization of any business the existing force of employees and functionaries would be as a body retained. It is proposed that the service should be forthwith strictly graded and subsequently recruited exclusively by admissions to the lowest grade. All persons desiring to enter the service should be free to file applications at the proper bureau upon passing certain simple mental or physical tests, not competitive in character,

strictly measured by the requirements of the position sought, and adapted only to insure a minimum grade of qualifications. Upon vacancies occurring in the force or a need of increase, the desired additions should be taken from the list of applicants on file, either in order of filed applications, or, more perfectly to prevent fraud, by the drawing of the requisite number of names from a wheel containing the entire list of eligibles.

The chief of the department shall be appointed at the discretion of the political executive, whether of city, state or nation, in order that responsibility for the general management of the business might be brought home to an elective officer. With this exception, and perhaps the further exceptions in some cases of the chiefs of a few important subordinate branches of the service, all positions should be filled by promotion in order of grades, such promotions to be determined by superiority of record and with certain requirements as to length of service. While the chief should have power of suspension, no discharge from the service should take place save by verdict of a tribunal expressly erected for that purpose, before which all charges of fault or incompetence, whether by superior against subordinate, by subordinate against superior, or by the outside public against members of the force, should be laid.

It is believed that such a plan of organization would absolutely prevent administrative coercion of members of the public service for partisan ends, and it is urgently recommended by Nationalists that it be immediately applied to the Post-office and all other business departments of the general Government, to the employees and to the public works department of all municipalities.

The nationalization of the several great branches of public service and productions which have been enumerated would directly affect, greatly for the better, the condition of a million and a half of workers.

Here truly would be a bulwark against capitalism, against corporate usurpation, against industrial oppression. Here would be a mighty nucleus for the coming industrial army. Here, too, would be a great body of consumers whose needs would suggest, and whose demands would sustain the beginning of the coming National distributive and productive system based on cost, with a currency which should gradually take the place of money by virtue of a greater purchasing value.

A single industry organized on such a basis as described, and guaranteeing to its toilers security, health, safety, dignity and

justice would be an object lesson of the advantage of Nationalism, even in its beginnings, which would greatly hasten the general adoption of the system. As a measure which cannot wait, seeing that at best, the consequences of its postponement must continue to be felt long after it is affected, we urge that such partial support as may be needful to enable them to attend school to the age of seventeen at least, be provided under proper guards by the State for the children with parents unable to maintain them without aid from their labor, and that with this provision the employment of children should be unconditionally forbidden, and their education made rigidly compulsory, to the end that equality of educational opportunities for all be established.

Seeing that it would be manifestly inconsistent to make the education of our children compulsory while permitting the unlimited importation of adult ignorance and vice, a necessary complement to any system of education would be such regulation of foreign immigration, as, without prejudice to honest intelligent poverty, should prevent the importation of persons grossly illiterate in their own language, of the defective and of criminals, merely political offenses not being considered crimes.

In reviewing the measures which have been mentioned as substantially representing, according to my belief, the present demands of Nationalists, it is observable that there is not one of them which is not demanded by considerations of humanity and public expediency quite without reference to Nationalism. A man has no need to be a Nationalist at all to advocate them. They have been freely and often favorably discussed by the press for years, and the leading political economists of this country and Europe are on record in favor of most if not all of them. As to some of the most important of these propositions, it is altogether probable that a majority of the American people, if they could be polled to-day, would favor them. Nationalists may be, as some say, a very extravagant and fantastical set of people, but there is certainly nothing fantastical about the plan of action which they propose. There is not even anything which can be said to be greatly in advance of public opinion. This moderation is not accidental, nor yet a result of policy, but a necessary consequence of the method of Nationalism, which is essentially gradual and progressive rather than abrupt or violent, the method of evolution as opposed to that of revolution.

As to the relation of Nationalism to certain political and social issues of the day, a few words may be pertinent.

First, as to the tariff question. When the nation conducts all

business for all, the common interest in every improvement will create a far stronger motive than now exists for all sorts of experiments and improvements in home industry, but owing to the public control of the production, tariffs will no longer be necessary as now to encourage private persons to undertake such new experiments. They will be tried as Government experiments are at present tried, costing the country only the expense of the experimental stations, the Nation without prejudice to the experiment, continuing if expedient, to buy in the cheapest market till its own is the cheapest.

The sectional jealousies based upon industrial rivalry, which now make States and Cities enemies of each other's prosperity and create sentiments of disunion, will disappear when a Nationalist pooling of interests shall interest all equally in the prosperity of all.

As to the race issue, the industrial discipline imposed by Nationalism, while of general benefit to the white population of the South in common with that of the North, will be an ideal system for development, guiding, and elevating the recently emancipated colored race. It should be distinctly stated that the National plan does not involve any forced association of the races in industry, or any other sort of involuntary social amalgamation.

As to the question of women's rights, Nationalism will put an end to every form of sexual slavery and place feminine freedom and dignity upon an unassailable basis by making women independent of men for the means of support. We consider that by no method less radical can women's rightful equality with men be established, or, if established, maintained.

The evils of intemperance have their strongest roots in the brutalizing conditions of existing society, in the poverty of the masses, their gross ignorance, their misery and despair, in the slavish dependence of women and children upon men, and in the interest of a large class of tradesmen in the sale of intoxicants. If this be true, then the abolition of poverty, the universality of the best education, the complete enfranchisement of women, with a system of distribution which will destroy all personal motive for stimulating the sale of intoxicants, constitute surely the most promising as well as the most radical line of true temperance reform.

While the nationalizing of land in such time and by such methods as shall involve least hardship to any is a part of Nationalism, and while the Nationalists meanwhile favor all practicable measures to prevent land monopoly and protect tenants and farmers, they are not persuaded that any measure

applying to land alone would furnish a sufficient remedy for existing industrial and social troubles.

While sympathizing with all efforts of workers to obtain small immediate improvements in their condition, Nationalists would have them reflect that no great improvements can be gained, and if gained, can be secure, under the present industrial system, and that the only effectual and peaceable way of replacing that system by a better one is offered by Nationalism. It is also pointed out that the plan of Nationalism, by the humane and just conditions which will be secured to the employees of every industry, as it comes under the public control, offers not only the greatest ultimate results, but the speediest and surest way for immediately benefitting great bodies of workers, absolutely without risk of derangement to business.

One hundred years ago, after immemorial years of repression, the human passion for liberty, for equality, for brotherhood, burst forth, convulsing Europe and establishing America. There is at hand another and far mightier outburst of the same forces, the results of which will be incomparably more profound, more far reaching and more beneficent. Men now past middle age are likely to see in Europe the last throne fall, and in America the first complete and full-orbed republic arise, a republic at once political, industrial and social.

It is instructive for Americans to remember that there is scarcely any argument brought to-day against Nationalism which was not in substance brought against the experiment of political equality undertaken in this country a century ago; scarcely one which does not spring from the same low and suspicious estimate of human nature, the same distrust of the people, the same blind belief in personal and class leadership and authority; scarcely one which was not, as to principle, answered a hundred years ago by Madison, Hamilton and Jay in the *Federalist*. And, indeed, how could it be otherwise? For what we propose is but the full development of the same republican experiment which the fathers undertook, a development now become necessary if we would preserve that experiment from ignominious failure.

In advocating equal rights for all as the only solution for the social and industrial problems of to-day, Nationalism follows the lines laid down by the founders of the republic and proves itself the legitimate heir to the traditions and the spirit of 1776. Guided by those traditions, sustained by that spirit, we cannot fail.

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